

S O M E

## CONSIDERATIONS

About the most proper Way of

## Raising Money

In the Present Conjunction.

**T**Here has happened nothing more memorable in this Age, nor in which the Providence of God has been more signally remarkable, than the late Revolution of the Government in these Kingdoms. The Changes in Naples and Portugal were not more surprizing, than what our Eyes have seen in our own Native Country. Nor were the Oppressions under which we laboured, and the Ruin which threatned us, less dreadful than that which caused the Revolt of those Kingdoms from those who abused the Trust of Government, to tyrannize over them. Our Laws were trampled under foot, and upon the matter abolish'd, to let up Will and Pleasure in their room, under the cant and pretence of dispensing Power. Our Constitution was overthrown by the trick of new Charters, and by closeting and corrupting

Members of Parliament Men were required, under pain of the highest displeasure, to consent and concur to the sacrificing their Religion and the Liberty of their Country. The worthiest, honestest and bravest Men in *England*, had been barbarously murdered, and to aggravate the Injustice which was done them, all had been varnish'd over with a Colour of Law, and the Formality of Tryals; not unlike the Case of *Naboth* and *Abab*. Those whom the Law had declared Traitors, were, in defiance of the National Authority, introduced into our Counsels, and the Conduct of Affairs put into their Hands. Our Universities were invaded by open Force, those who were in the lawful Possession of the Government of Colledges, turned out, and Papists sent thither in their room; and if that Attempt had thoroughly prospered, the Churches and Pulpits would soon have followed. It were vain to go about to enumerate Particulars. In a Word, the Nation was undone. All was lost. The Judges were suborn'd or threatned to declare, that the King was Master of all the Laws; and the Bishops were required to publish this new-created Prerogative in all the Churches of *England*, by the mouths of the Clergy; which when some of them refused to do, representing to the King, with the utmost Submission and Modesty, that neither Conscience nor Justice permitted them to do what he desired, they were prosecuted at Law, as if they had been guilty of some great Crime.

Crime. Letters were written and intercepted, by which it appeared evidently, that the Change of our Religion was determined, and that Popery was to be brought in with all speed, lest the Opportunity should be lost. And for the better compassing this pious Design, our Civil and Parliamentary Rights were to be taken away, *in ordine ad spirituale*. And when the Nation, and those who were concern'd for it, being terrified by the greatness of the Danger, would have compounded so far, as to have taken away the Penal Laws against Papists, and so have set them upon a Level with other English Subjects, provided the Test might have been continued, and the Government secured from falling into the Hands of that Faction, all such Offers were despised and rejected with scorn: nor would any thing content the Bigotry and Arbitrary Humour of those who were then in the Saddle, less than the Total enslaving of the Nation, and the re-establishment of that idolatrous Religion, from which our Ancestors had freed themselves with so much Bravery and Generosity, in the beginning of the last Century.

This deplorable state of Things awaken'd the Minds of those of our Gentry and Nobility, who had any thing remaining in them of that English Love of Liberty and Impatience of Slavery, which has so often rescued this Nation from the brink of Ruin. They saw to what the Necessity of Self-defence obliged them, and resolv'd to

shake off the Y oak they could not bear. And in order to this, many of them (as we all know) applied themselves to some principal Members of the States General of the United Provinces, and to the Prince of *Orange*, (their Stat-holder and Captain-General) representing to them how nearly they were concern'd in what then passed in *England*, which was but one branch of the Design driven on by the French King, and his Adherents, for enslaving all *Europe*, and rooting out what they called the Northern Heresy, both Name and Thing. They shew'd them, that if they suffered the Conspiracy of our common Enemies to go on any further, they would infallibly be involv'd in our Ruin, and that very speedily; and must necessarily fall under the French Y oak, of which they had felt the weight in the years 1672, & 1673; and had lately heard more of it from those great numbers of persecuted French Protestants which had taken Refuge in their Country. They intimated how glorious it would be for them to become the Sanctuary of oppressed Innocence. And lastly, they put them in mind of what had heretofore been done for their Republick by the English Nation, when they had newly cast off the Spanish Tyranny, and were forced to implore the Succor of their Neighbours against a Power which then carried on the same Designs, and much by the same Methods, which we have seen copied from them by the French in our time. They convinced them that all Reasons of Gratitude, Humanity, Policy and Christianity



anity concur'd to encline them to comply with their Request in putting to their helping Hand for the opposing a Bank to that Torrent which otherwise would overflow all *Christendom*. Neither was this Business of a nature to admit any Delay. Our Patriots made them see, and prov'd to them by Reasons unanswerable, ( which are now obvious to every one's Observation ) that if they slipped the Opportunity then in their Hands, by the French King's drawing his Forces to the *Upper Rhine*, to begin the War by the Siege of *Philipsburg*, (which was occasioned by the false Intelligence he had received from his Ambassador and Pensioners in our Court) who being intoxicated with some late Successes, despised the People at a great rate, and thought it below them to get Information of those they called the Mal-Contents) I say, if they let pass that occasion of helping us, it would, in all probability, be too late to attempt any thing hereafter; the two Kings hoping by their joint Forces and Counsels in a short time, to put both the Dutch and English out of a Capacity of disputing their Pleasure. All these Arguments, and the Instances of our worthy Country-men, prevailed to that degree, that the *Dutch* resolv'd upon lending us their best Troops, and actually sent them over under the Conduct of the Prince of *Orange*, who found the Nation as well disposed to receive him as could be expected from a People who had suffered so much already, and looked for worse every day than other.

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At the time of the Prince's landing, several great Lords and such Gentlemen who had Courage enough to expose their Lives and Estates for the Deliverance of their Country, appeared in Arms, as had been concerted; and what the Success of this Heroick Undertaking was we all know; and every good Man still blesses God for his Goodness to this Nation, in prospering and rendring effectual so just and pious an Enterprize. And altho the *Dutch* found their Account, as well as we, in the Success of this glorious Action; and besides, the English Parliament recompensed them fully for the Charge they had been at in this Expedition, paying them 600000*l.* which was the Sum of Money they demanded; yet there is no true English-man, nor vertuous Man amongst us, who will not think himself bound, upon all occasions, to acknowledge the unspeakable Obligation we have to that wise and generous Republick, for assisting us in the time of our Distress, as we had formerly done by them, vvhhen they vv ere in a like Extremity. Not that the *Dutch* can pretend (vvhat some Parasites, among our selves have fondly imagin'd and printed) to have acquired by their Arms, a Right of Conquest over us, no more than vve had done over them an hundred Years ago, vvhen vve sent them Assistance against the *Spaniard*, or Monsieur de *Schomberg* over the *Portuguese*, vvhen he led an Army for their Deliverance. But as then, so novv, a People oppressed and unjustly

unjustly insulted over, by those vvho should protect them, and study their Happiness, having first tried all fair means, and used all sorts of Submissions to touch the Hearts, and change the Minds of thier cruel Oppressors, and at length finding all such means ineffectual, do invoke the Assistance of their Neighbours, who finding it their Interest, upon many accounts, to prevent the Ruin of those that call upon them for Aid, and withal commiserating their sad and desperate Condition, do assist them with their Armies and Fleets, to prevent the Destruction coming upon them; which endeavours in conjunction with those of the oppressed Nation, God having crowned with the desired Success, it may well excite in the Hearts of those who have been thus helped, a very high degree of Gratitude, and may be a Foundation of a lasting Union and Friendship between the two Nations, but can by no means give either of them any right of Conquest or Pre-eminence of Authority over the other, no more than if a Man's House were on fire, his Neighbour would acquire any right of Propriety in it by helping to quench it. This I should not have mention'd, but for the Petulancy of some Flatterers, who would make us believe we have brought our selves under a more absolute condition of Slavery, by taking up Arms, than we were in before; which was so far from the Thoughts of our Ancestors, in the like case, that neither *Queen Elizabeth*, the Earl of *Leicester*,  
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nor any other Person who had a Hand in the Deliverance of the Dutch from the Tyranny of the Spaniards, ever dreamt of having gotten any Title of Power over them by what they had done for them, nor ever demanded or exercised any, other than what was intrusted in their Hands by the Dutch themselves, as long as they thought it necessary for their own Good. And our present King is so far from having any thoughts of this kind, that we know from the Learned Prelate, who preach'd his Coronation-Sermon, that there is nothing he detests more than the Imputation or Suspicion of a Conquest. Which is an evident Proof, not only of his Majesties good Intentions to this Kingdom, but likewise of his great Wisdom, and the Soundness of his Judgment, since if we were conquer'd, we should fall under the Dutch Republick, having been conquer'd by their Men and Money, and so our Government would no longer be a Monarchy, but we should be a Province, or Part of that Commonwealth.

But to return where I left off, Things being brought about in this manner, as we all know, and King *James* being run away, the Nation, though justly incens'd against him, did not think fit to change the antient Form of Government, but set the Crown upon the Head of the present King and Queen, (with such Limitations as they thought necessary) being willing for the first Part, (according to the Custom of our Ancestors,

cestors, both in the Saxon times and since, upon the Deposition of Kings for Misgovernment) to take the next in Blood, if there was no reasonable Objection ; and at the same time, to shew their thankfulness to the then Prince of *Orange*, for the Share he had in our Deliverance, by heading our Patriots, and leading the Dutch Army, they associated him in the Throne with the Queen his Wife, as may be seen in the Act which constitutes and directs the Administration of this present Government. This was thought safer and better than any new Scheme of Government, or then a Regency, which yet was debated, and put to the question in both Houses : And presently after, a War was declared against *France*, and such a Confederacy entred into by this Nation, both with the Dutch, and several other Princes and States, as has already produced very good Effects, and it may be hoped (with God's Blessing and good Management) will be effectual to humble the haughty French Monarch, and to settle us once again upon Foundations of Religion and Liberty, not easily to be shaken.

It will be readily granted by all wise and well-intentionated Persons, that the Safety and highest Interest of the Nation does absolutely require the Support of this present Government, and the maintaining of the Confederacy into which we are entred. If any Man doubts this, let him recal to his Mind the miserable Condition in which we were four years ago, when we were bidding Adieu to all that was dear to us, our

Religion, our Laws and our Liberties, which the Popish Faction had swallowed up in Imagination, and would have done so effectually, if God had not appeared for us in a miraculous Manner. Let such a Man lay his Hand upon his Heart, and consider how the French King has treated his Fellow-Protestants, contrary to the Faith of all Promises, Oaths and Edicts made by himself and his Ancestors, surpassing the Barbarity both of antient and later Persecutors. Let him remember the strict union of Interest and Counsels that was between that King and King *James*, who both drove on the same design of exterminating Hereticks, and rooting the remainders of Liberty out of the World; insomuch that we see the French King has made King *James's* Cause his own; and no body doubts, or can doubt, but if he should ever recover the Possession of these Kingdoms, it would be only to hold them in quality of the French King's Lieutenant, to whose Ambition and Bigotry we must all be sacrificed. I say, let any Man who makes it a question, whether it be necessary to support this Government, and enable it to go on with the Confederacy, revolve these things in his Mind, and at the same time figure to himself, in case our Government, for want of supply, should not be able to carry on the War, and so we should again be over-run, and reduced under the Yoke of our Enemies, with what redoubled Rage and Fury they would return upon us, under the colour of recovering their Right, and punishing Rebellion;

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and how little appearance there would be, after this, of any new opportunity of Deliverance, or of a possibility to hold up the Protestant Religion in any part of the World, after the destruction of its Professors in *England* and *Holland*, which I join to each other, because we all know their Interests are now inseparable, and they must stand and fall together. And if after all this, any one can be backward in doing his utmost to make good what we have done in this Revolution, or be willing we should fall back into that Gulph of Misery and Confusion from whence we are so lately escaped, (which will be the infallible effect of not supporting this Government and Confederacy) I confess I have no more to say to such a Man.

But to come to the main design of this Discourse; It is certainly impossible, in the present state of things, that this Government should subsist, and much less be able to bear its Part in the Alliance against our Common Enemies, unless there be great Sums of Money given. Those are the Sinews of War, and all other Business. Our dear-bought Experience has taught us what vast Taxes are absolutely necessary to maintain those Armies and Fleets which are requisite for our Security, and for the defence of our Religious and Civil Rights: and provided we attain those ends, it will not be thought, at long-run, we have bought them too dear. In this case we may well say, *Dimidium plus Toto*. A wise and a good Man will rather chuse (if it came to that pass) to enjoy one half of his Estate,



with the Liberty of his Conscience and the Preservation of his Birth-right, than to possess a double or treble proportion of Riches, whilst his Mind must be enslaved to the Superstition of knavish and interested Priests, his innocent Friends and Country-men sacrificed to the Idol of Arbitrary Power, (as we have lately seen it practised) and the Title that is left him to his own Possessions and Liberty, only precarious and during pleasure. Our good Neighbours and Allies the Dutch, do not think much of the Charge they were at in freeing themselves from the Oppression of the Spaniards, nor of that they have been forced to undergo for the maintaining their Country and Liberty against the Insults of the French King, tho they have been forced, some years, to pay half their Revenue, and sometimes all, and more than all, for carrying on of the War. The *Suisses* do not regret the hazardous & chargeable effort which they made to deliver themselves from the intolerable Tyranny of the House of *Austria*, nor the infinite numbers of Men, and the Money that has been employ'd since that time to make good what was then done. Provided that Warlike Nation always prefer the Love of Liberty, derived to them from their Ancestors, before the Love of Money (with which their Enemies endeavour to corrupt them) they have nothing to fear. Nay, in *France* it self, which is the Center of Tyranny, and where even Mens Minds are enslaved and captivated by the Artifice of Priests and scribbling Court-Sycophants,

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and the very love and desire of Liberty is lost, (which assuredly is the utmost of all Misfortunes) there are yet some Persons (as we see by several Writings) who aspire after a Deliverance, and would willingly hazard their Lives, and part with what they have most precious, to vindicate their Country from the barbarous and inhumane Tyranny under which it groans; and if they were happy enough to compass the Execution of so noble and vertuous a Design, they would think no Charge nor no Expence too great to maintain those Rights and Privileges which have been heretofore enjoy'd by their Ancestors, and of which they have been so unjustly robb'd, without any prospect of Redress, ever since their Kings grew strong enough to govern them, without assembling the States of the Country. And since that time they have made a Shift, by the assistance of Priests, and mercenary Upstarts rais'd by themselves to favour their Arbitrary Purposes, to bring that Nation to a pass, which has given occasion to some who have long voyaged in the Eastern Parts of the World, to affirm, that there is more Tyranny effectually practised in *France* in one Year, than in all those Parts in twenty; the Princes of those Countries not having learn'd to refine in those Diabolical Politicks to the degree which the *French* have arriv'd at.

To this purpose I cannot but mention what was said to me at *Paris* ten Years ago, by the great Historian Monsieur de *Mezeray*, whom I knew very particularly, and who was a Man of great Worth and Vertue,  
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and therefore very ill used by the Ministry of France. Discourſing with him about the difference of the Government in France and England, he broke out into this Expreſſion, *O fortunatos nimium, bona ſi ſua nōrint, Angligenas !* We had once (ſaid he) in France the ſame Happineſs, and the ſame Priviledges which you have. Our Laws were made by Representatives of our own chooſing : Our Money was not taken from us, but by our own Conſent, our Kings were ſubject to the Rules of Law and Reaſon, (with many other things of that kind, which he added) but now alas ! we are miſerable, and all is loſt. Think nothing, Sir, too dear to maintain theſe precious Advantages ; and if ever there be occaſion, venture your Life, your Eſtate, and all you have, rather than ſubmit to the miſerable Condition to which you ſee us reduc'd. Theſe words, with what I actually ſaw of the Miſery of that Country, made an Impreſſion in me which nothing can efface.

The Queſtion therefore with all ſober Men and ſincere Proteſtants, will not be, Whether we ſhall maintain our Liberty, by ſupporting this Government, and enabling it to carry on the War ; nor conſequently whether we ſhall raiſe Sums of Money proportionable to that end ; but only what will be the beſt manner and method of raiſing Money, ſo as may be moſt for the eaſe of the Subject, and above all, for the upholding our Conſtitution, and ſecuring thoſe ends for which we took up Arms ; and that was not any perſonal regard whatſoever, but the recovery and ſecurity of our Rights and Liberties, which

which had been so unjustly invaded. This is the thing we must always keep in our Eye, and steer our whole course by this Pole-star; otherwise the hazards we have hitherto exposed our selves to, and the Success with which God has blessed us, will little avail us, whilst by flying one Extream we run into another; or, to use the old Proverb, by avoiding *Scylla* fall into *Charibdis*.

The way which has been most discours'd of by some who pretend a great Zeal for the present Government, and which seems to be most agreeable to some People, is to lay a Home-Excise upon things eatable and drinkable, and several other Merchandizes which are sold in the Market. This is the way used in *Holland*, and the like was practis'd in *England* in the time of our Civil Wars. But because I cannot approve this manner of Taxing at this time in this Kingdom; as thinking it of the utmost hazard in this beginning of our Settlement, and apparently destructive to the ends of it, I shall set down my Reasons, (with as much plainness as I can) together with some that were mentioned the last Session of Parliament by some worthy Members of the House of Commons, that so if other Men be convinc'd by them, I may have the Satisfaction of reflecting, that I have been useful in some degree in suggesting those things which may contribute to the maintaining and continuing the Liberty of my Country; which as it is dear to me above all things in the World, so in my humble Opinion, it is very much concern'd in this Point.

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My first two Considerations in reference to such an Excise are, That if the Parliament should grant it, they neither know what they grant, nor can ever hope to see an end of such a Grant as that is. To make this out, I shall give a short Historical Account of the Excise now in being, that so we may judg of *Hercules* by his Foot, which I think will afford us such measures as cannot easily deceive us.

Our Ancestors, whose chief care it was to maintain those Rights and Priviledges which distinguish'd them so advantageously from all the other People of these Western Parts of *Europe*, and who delivered those Priviledges to us as our best Inheritance, did constantly avoid this sort of Tax, knowing its danger, and abhorring the servile Look of *Bureaux* in their Market-places, and miserable Fellows to come into their Houses like Searchers, as if they had hid some Criminal, or conceal'd some Arms or Papers to the prejudice of the Government. It could not enter into their Heads that a Leg of Mutton ought to be suspected for Treason, or a Loin of Beef, which was thought worthy to be knighted by some of our Kings, should be accused of conspiring against the State.

This Example of our Ancestors, with the good Success it has had, I should think, ought to weigh a great deal with us in a matter of this Importance; to which if we add the condition of the French, and others of our Neighbours, who are loaded with an infinite number of Entries, Imposts, in a word, Excises



Excises of all sorts, ( which at first were contrived and imposed upon specious pretences of great necessity of the State, but never were, nor will be let go by those who have found the sweetness of them ) this will add great force to our Argument. But we must come nearer the Point, and shew how lately, and in what manner, Excises have been rais'd in *England*, and what use has been made of them, together with the Artifices by which they have been procured.

The first Excise rais'd in *England*, was in the time of our Civil Troubles and Disorders. Neither did those who rais'd it, adventure upon this way, till they had try'd all others to supply the necessities into which they had brought themselves. They had seized into their Hands the Revenues both of the Crown and Church, and exposed them to Sale. Mens Estates had been sequestred, and their Property invaded and destroy'd, under the name of Delinquents. And when the Money was spent which had been rais'd by these oppressive methods, they then set up this way of Excise. But that had not been paid neither at that time, but for the Army which was then kept up, as appeared in the Sedition of the Butchers and others upon that occasion.

Nor did they who imposed the Excise in those days, omit any thing that might help to sweeten so bitter a Potion, and perswade the People to swallow it with the less Reluctancy. They urged the great necessity there was of it at that time, which was at least equal

for those who then raised it with any that can be now pretended to carry on this War. To make it pass the easier, they begun it in the most modest way they could devise. If I mistake not, it was at first, but for a Month or two, or three Months at most. They were sensible how averse the Nation was to this way of Taxing, and therefore they durst not, in their first Attempt, adventure farther. When the necessity of their Affairs, and the Streights in which they found themselves, forced them to go on with the Excise, yet they would persuade the People, it should last but a little while, and be presently over. But for all that pretence, we know too well it has not ceased to this very day. When the Serpent gets his Head into a hole, 'tis no hard matter for him to draw his whole body after it. Wise Men, like good Physicians, must oppose the beginnings of Evils. 'Tis easy to prevent Mischiefs, which it is not easy, nor possible, to remedy. The Ability of Politicians is known by their fore-seeing and obviating Inconveniences, too strong to be removed when they are once established.

*Turpius ejicitur quam non admittitur hospes.*

Soon after the Restauration of K. Charles II. the House of Commons expressed a desire, as their Predecessors had often done, to take away the Court of Wards, and they had long Deliberations how to settle upon the Crown a Recompence for it. Many ways were proposed (as is usual in such cases) but at last it was thought best to lay it on Land; and they agreed the

the sum to be 100000*l. per Annum*, and appointed a Committee to settle an equal rate upon every County towards it. This would have procured another great advantage to the Nation, and especially to the associated Counties, and others that are over-tax'd in the Monthly Assessment, by bringing in a just and equal way of taxing all the Lands of *England* according to their true value. The Committee, in pursuance of the Order of the House, having taken great pains in settling a new Rate, at length agreed upon one, and reported it to the House, and it is entred in the Journal. But while they were taking all these pains, the Court was privately inform'd by some self-designing Men, that it would be of much greater advantage to them to get a Grant of the Excise upon Beer and Ale, since the value of that was unknown, and they assur'd them that it would amount to a Sum vastly beyond what the Parliament intended them in lieu of the Court of Wards. These Men encouraged the Court to undertake this Work, and promised their own assistance, and endeavours for the success of their proposal. Hereupon the Court resolved to push for the settling of the whole Excise: And by threatening privately the Members of that House with a Dissolution, and by giving to some considerable Places, they got a *Question* put to settle one Moiety of the Excise (which had been invented and rais'd on evident necessity in the times of Civil War, and not granted longer than a few Months) upon the Crown in Fee, in lieu of the Court of Wards, and the other

Moiety on the King for his Life.

The former Part, to give the Moiety in Fee, in recompence of the Wardships, was carried in the Affirmative, tho, in truth, it was the giving 300000 *l.* a year, for one; for which that House is justly blamed, and will be so, as ill Husbands for the Kingdom, and unfaithful to their Trust. A great Parliament-Man, lately deceased, undertook to make out, it was the giving away the Barley-Land of *England*.

The other Part, *viz.* to give the other Moiety for Life, (as much as that House was influenced by the Court) was first carried in the Negative, which enraged them to such a degree, that the next day a Message was sent to the House, to let them know they were to be dissolved a month after. This was a strange and unusual Message. They might have been quickned to dispatch Publick Bills, and told, the Session would be but short: But the Message, as sent, put Men throughout the Kingdom on supplanting of them. If the Members staid in Town, (and go they could not without leave of the House) their several Interests in their Countries were indangered. If they went down, the settling the Excise for Life might be carried, in their absence. This was the *Dilemma* the Court had brought them to; and accordingly it was granted before that Session ended.

All this was compassed by the Artifices and Clamours of the Court-Party, who we since have seen aimed at nothing lower than the getting such a Revenue in the possession of the Crown, as might have enabled them

them to govern by Arbitrary Power, and abolish Parliaments. They pleaded an absolute necessity (as some Men do now in their Discourses about the Town) for what they demanded. But there was indeed no necessity, when K. Charles return'd, to give him the Excise. 'Tis true, he had great occasions, on his return, for Money; but the Parliament, after the Excise given, found out other ways, both by Land and otherwise, to give great Sums; and by such ways they might have suppli'd him then without the Excise. 'Tis allow'd, his Revenue was fit to be enlarged beyond that of his Ancestors, because the constant Charge of the Government was greater. But this was no reason for an Excise. The putting a bar upon Crown-grants of the Revenue, and appropriating the forfeited Estates to the Crown, would soon have done more than the Excise was then valued at, one Moiety being given for the Wardships, which the Court valued but at 100000 *l. per annum*.

If it were fit at that time to raise the yearly Revenue to 1200000 *l. per annum*, (though that was more by 400000 *l.* than the yearly Establishment and Charge of the Crown then, or for many years after, came to) if the Parliament of 1660, could not, at once, bring it to that, they might have gone as far as they could without the Excise, and left it to other Parliaments to make it up. They gave the Crown, without counting the Excise, a greater Revenue than ever it had, or than it could pretend to spend in time of Peace. And

accordingly we see what amazing Sums were expended every year, out of what was pretended to be absolutely necessary for the support of the Government, in Ways not to be mentioned or remembred, but only in order to prevent the like for the future.

And when this was given, all that Parliament got, by their Zeal to settle 1200000 *l. per annum*, was, That the Court, next Parliament, pretended it was not so much as was intended; and therefore got, by influencing Committees, such Reports, upon which they obtained 2 or 300000 *l.* more added to the standing Revenue.

Upon the Demise of King *Charles*, what necessity was there to continue the Excise to King *James*, I mean the Moiety then determined? Could any thing under a Popish Prince be a greater Security to the Protestant Religion, and Liberty of the Kingdom, than the smallness of the Revenue? And was it not the main Argument of King *Charles* and the Clergy, against passing the Bill of Exclusion? They urged, that though the Crown should come to a Popish Successor, he could not be able to force his Religion upon the Nation, by reason of the falling off of the one half of the Excise at K. *Charles's* death, and thereby the ceasing of so great a Branch of the Revenue. Which if it had been kept low, or moderately enlarged for a time, a short time, if the Commons could but agree among themselves, they might have stopp'd



stopp'd all invasion of Property, or danger of Tyranny.

If ever such a Revenue would have been let fall, no doubt it would have been then. But we see, in the Instance of King *James's* Parliament, when Excise is once begun, there is no end of it to be expected. That Parliament gave him, for his Life, what was fallen, and not only so, but an Increase upon Linen, Wine, Tobacco, &c. worth near the double. Had King *James* continued among us, I doubt not, this new Excise would have been continued; nor do I doubt, whenever such Grants are made, upon pretence of a present Necessity, but there will be Arts and Methods found out by those in the Ministry, to have them perpetuated. When once an Excise is up, we see it must be kept on. It's easy to find a necessity for it; and where that is wanting, yet one Parliament must be as kind as another, or else it is want of respect to the present Crown'd Head.

I think there was never but one Excise raised that ever fell again, and that was the Additional Excise given in the Reign of King *Charles* for Years, and yet even that, though it ceased some time, was again revived by the last Parliament, and so continueth.

This Principle, That the House must ever be as kind to the Present Government as their Predecessors were to others, will carry things at any time against the Interest of the Kingdom. And therefore Money should not be raised by the Commons in that manner, in which the House may be pressed with Arguments they have



have formerly experienc'd have wrought on their good Natures, beyond the Interest of their Countries who sent them.

If it be said, Are not the Parliament Masters of their own Resolutions, and may not they safely trust themselves, since it is in their power to put an end to an Excise, whenever they think there is no farther occasion for it? To this I answer, They are not so much Masters of their Resolutions as some think. Sollicitations go a great way. Pretences are specious. Men are frail. Taxes of this kind do not immediately touch the Members of Parliament themselves, who are landed-Men, and therefore not so directly concerned to get them off. To this I add, That our wisest and best Policy is to keep a Parliament out of the temptation of doing that which may prove the ruin of the Nation. Men do not care for being thought disaffected to a Government, as it is always thrown in their dish, if they offer at diminishing any Revenue that has been given, and are not as forward as other People to gratify the Crown and the Ministers in all their expectations.

There was not long ago an Instance of this in Parliament. It appeared to the Commons, that besides all Grants of Lands by *K. Charles* and *K. James*, there was above 200000 *l. per ann.* charge laid on the Revenue. And therefore, to prevent the like for the future, and that the Court might not, when they pleased, without Parliament, tax us by their Patents, which our Estates must

must make up, there was a Proviso added to the Bill for settling the Hereditary Revenue, to make all Grants void against a Successor. And though, besides the Reasons above-mentioned, the State of Affairs, and the charge of making War, now so much greater than formerly, required such provision, yet how Heinously and Spitefully was it represented by some, as if it proceeded only from prejudice to King *William*? So that though the Act went through the House of Commons, to be lodg'd with the Lords, with them it slept.

I insist the more upon this Observation, That Excise rais'd once (tho on pretence of the greatest Necessity, and that it shall be only Temporary, and but for a short time) never fails, by one means or other, to be continued, because I desire the Importance of the thing may be considered; and in case it should so fall out in the Excise, which now some seem to desire, it ought sure, at least, seriously to be considered, what our Case will be thereupon.

We know very well, That 800000 *per An.*, or thereabouts, with good husbandry, will discharge all the Expences of the Government in time of Peace. Therefore in the year 1660, when the Court had screw'd their demands to the highest, they desired only the standing Revenue to be 1100000 *l.* and whatever they got afterwards, was not on pretence that more was necessary, but, that they had not so much.

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That very standing Revenue which was settled in King *Charles's* time was so great, that every body remembers, when a great Army was raised, the House of Commons was tryed to give but one 300000 *l. per An.* more, which if they could have got, no one doubts but it was design'd there should have been an end of Parliaments. And that very thing was prest so handsomly, and so much to the purpose by some, who were then Members of the House of Commons, that the very Pensioners of that Parliament, voted against the augmentation of the Revenue which was desired, lest Parliaments should end all at once, and their Pensions with them.

The Revenue now in time of Peace, will yield above all charges 1500000 *l. per An.* If more be given in this way of Excise, and it should be continued, 'tis the giving up the very being of Parliaments.

There are still many other Reasons against this way of Taxing by an Excise.

I have shewed already, That this is a giving men know not what: That Moiety of the Excise given in 1660, for 100000 *l. per An.* hath since proved worth Three and a half. That which King *Charles* desired as 300000 *l.* when it was got by King *James*, proved to be worth more than double that value. And to this I may add, That the more such Revenues prove, if they should be continued, the more dangerous for the Nation.

This is a troublesome and a slavish sort of Tax. The present Government came in upon a foot of Liberty ; What was the reason that the Chimney-money was taken off, but only this, That every man might have his House free ? Shall the Nation be mock'd by taking off a Feather ; and in the room of it, laying on a Mill-stone ? This is a way to bring a Lord-Dane into every one of our Families.

The Difficulty of Raising this Tax, will be very great ; the People of *England* dis-relish it extremely. I have heard some of the Wisest and Honestest Members of the House of Commons say, They would be hang'd up at the door of the House, before they would consent to it. All that lived in the late times remember with what difficulty the Excise was raised by those who were then in the Government : And 'tis certain, they could never have compass'd it, but for the Terror of the Army then kept up. Now if the Parliament should raise Money in this way, to pay our Army, and should be necessitated, as they were, to keep up a standing Army to gather it, we shall be at a fine pass. The Money must be raised to pay our Armies, that they may carry on the War vigorously against our Enemies, and instead of any such Service from them, they must be kept at home to raise the Excise.

The common Argument for an Excise, That it will spare our Lands, is grounded upon a false sup-

position : This is not a sparing our Lands, but a charging them for ever with double what is needful. The dearer the Farmer pays for his Commodities, the less Rent he will pay ; and the less his Product yields him clear, accordingly he must value his Farm. The more ( for example ) is laid on Lead, the less will Woods and Oar yield ; and so of other Commodities.

The greatest Excises which are laid in *Holland*, are upon Commodities which are not of the growth of the Countrey : Their Corn comes from *Dantzick*, their Flesh from *Denmark* ; and so of several other things ; so that by loading them, they oblige their People to consume the Goods of their own Growth and Countrey, such as Cheese, Milk, Herrings, &c. Whereas if an Excise be laid here, it must be upon things growing in this Kingdom ; which undoubtedly will hinder the Consumption of such things ; for the dearer they are, the less people will buy of them, and the more they will reduce their Families, that they may live cheap.

The Policy of our Ancestors tended to encourage the Consumption of all Home-Commodities, which is certainly the true Interest of the Nation. Such a Tax would go directly against this Maxim. Heretofore the Gentry and Nobility of *England* lived altogether in the Countrey ; where they continually spent the Product of the Land : Now they all flock

to *London*, where their way of living is quite differing from that used heretofore, and they do not expend in proportion the third part of things of our product, to what they did when they lived among their Neighbours. The Yeomen and Gentlemen of smaller Estates, are now, generally speaking, the only constant Residents in the Countrey. If an Excise should come to raise the Price of all things; how shall these men maintain their Families? And if they put them off, or diminish them, who shall spend the growth of the Lands?

It is evident, this Tax will fall very hard every where upon the poor Farmers; and those who are best able to pay it, will be most spared: For example; if an Excise should be laid upon Malt, where will the Burden lye? The price of it will certainly sink in the Countrey, for want of Consumption, by reason of the new Imposition. The Brewers in great Cities and Towns, such as *London*, *Bristol*, *Exeter*, *Norwich*, &c. will be the only Gainers, since they will buy their Malt cheap, and sell their drink as dear, or dearer than before. And the poor Farmer must bear the loss; which will quickly be the cause of throwing up the Lands in all parts of the Kingdom.

But another thing which, I confess, with me is of the highest weight, is this. We know the Safety of the Nation depends upon the Liberty of Elections of Members to Parliament. The Excise-men go already  
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a great way in many Corporations, by their Interest in Inns and Ale-houses, in influencing the Elections to Parliament. What then do we think they will do when they have an Interest in every Private House? If there were no other Objection against Taxing by an Excise, I should think this one abundantly sufficient, with any man that knows how much the Being and Well-being of the Nation depends upon Free Parliaments, and consequently upon the entire Liberty of those who are Electors, in giving their Votes.

If such an Excise should not be general at first, yet when once that way of Taxing is brought in, it will quickly grow general: If it be laid one time upon some Commodities, it will next time be laid on others. All we have, will come to be Exciseable; and it will be with us at length, as it is at *Amsterdam*; where (to use the words of one who has lately written in that Countrey) a Dish of Fish, with its Sauce, before it be served up to the Table, pays Excise Thirty several times: And this indeed ought to be considered the more, because of those in our Court and Councils, who have been bred up in *Holland*, where every thing is taxed.

One thing more I must add; which is, That no Tax whatever is so chargeable in the gathering, as an Excise: That which is laid already upon Beer and Ale, costs above 80000 *l. per An.* in Collecting; and



and if there should be a general Excise raised, it would come to near three times that Sum.

My chief design in writing this Paper, was to shew the danger of granting an Excise by Act of Parliament, which I hear discoursed of in several parts of the Kingdom, as a way which will be offer'd by some to support this War; though it was debated and rejected the last Session of Parliament. Perhaps there may be some, who do not sufficiently apprehend the dangerous consequence of this manner of Taxing; and for their service it is, that I set down my thoughts upon this matter. No man in *England* is more thoroughly sensible than I am, of the necessity of carrying on this War. I am of opinion, That the liberty of this Nation, the preservation of this Government, and the security of the Protestant Interest throughout *Europe*, do mainly depend upon the success of it. I have shewed, that it is impossible to go on with it, without giving great Sums of Money; and I am heartily for giving those Sums, when our Representatives shall know what they are, by having an exact State of the War for the next Year laid before them; which I presume will be their first Care. This is reasonable and necessary, and more than this cannot be desired. Only we would have the Taxes so laid, as when the necessity of Taxing ceases, the Taxes may cease with that necessity.

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There are other ways of raising Money besides a General Excise. The *English* Nation has now, at the Expence of its own Money and Blood reduced, *Ireland*. Must none of the Lands of those Rebels, after all, be applied to the charge of this War? Is all that has been said and declared in Parliament, upon that Head, to no purpose? Must the *Irish* Papists be again restored to the Possession of their Estates, and so this Kingdom not only brought under the necessity of maintaining a great standing Army, to keep them from Rising and Cutting the Protestants Throats; but likewise be defeated of the Lands, which they were made believe should serve in a great measure, to reimburse them for the prodigious Sums that have been advanced for the reducing of that Country? I hope the wisdom of the Parliament will take that matter into Consideration; and not suffer themselves to be Frustrated of so great a Sum of Money, as those *Irish* Lands will yield; which, if they were exposed to Sale, would find Purchasers enough, at such kind of rates as they were formerly sold for upon the like occasion; and the Money which should arise from them, would serve for a Fund to defray a great part of the next Years expence of the War.

It were better to return to the Chimney-Money, than to load the Nation with this new Excise. I do not say that ought to be done; for I think it absurd

furd and dishonourable, after having taken off that Burden so lately, with so much Pompous ostentation and expression of desire to gratifie the People, to lay it on anew: That would have a very ill look. But yet I think, supposing such a necessity, it were wisdom, of two Evils to take the least; and rather return under the pressure of an old Burthen, than submit to a greater, and run so great an hazard as that of settling a Revenue, which if continued, might give opportunity and encouragement to ill Ministers of State to attempt, and perhaps atchieve designs like those, which we tell the World, were the cause of our joining in the late Revolution.

There are Commissioners of Publick Accounts, Sitting by Authority of Parliament, to examine how the Treasure of the Nation has been laid out for these last Three Years. It will be seen in this Report, what immoderate Pensions have been granted, and to what kind of men; and what incredible Sums of Money the Nation has been cheated of, by those employ'd in Civil and Military Trusts. I do not know why such People should not be obliged to Refund: And if there be care taken for the future to prevent such abuses, the Sums of Money which must be Raised for the defence of the Nation, and the support of the Government, will be very much lessened.

There will doubtless, be many Proposals made in Parliament, of different natures, for ways and methods of Raising Money. Whenever there is occasion for a Tax, there is always great variety of Projects of that kind. But when all is done, I humbly conceive, there will be nothing upon the whole matter found so safe, and so much for the good of the Nation, as a Land-Tax. Other things may help, but this will be the main Resource: 'Tis true, this will smart while it lasts, but we are sure to have an end of it. The Members of Parliament themselves will be obliged in interest to take it off, when the occasion ceases; and besides the Freeholders of *England*, will never endure the continuance of a Land-Tax, longer than there is an evident necessity for it. This is the way which our Ancestors walkt in upon these occasions; and this is the safe and sure way.

It has been laid down in Parliament as a good rule, To support the Government in time of Peace, by Taxes upon Trade; and in time of War, to have recourse to the Land, because that Tax will not be in danger of being continued when the War is over.

I do not decide which of the two sorts of Taxes upon Land is best; the Monthly Assessment, or the Pound rate, which likewise comprehends Personal Estates, as far as they can be discovered. I know  
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opinions are much divided upon this point. The Associated Counties and some others, are much for the later of these Taxes; the North of England and other parts for the former; such a question is too nice to be handled by a man without doors. The Choice must be determined in this difficulty, by the wisdom of the Parliament. But one thing, I think, all are for, the preserving of the Constitution, and the maintaining our Liberty, for the sake whereof, all this Money is to be Raised. And that is all which I am pleading for. Let no man be misled, by a pretence of convenience, or disburdening his Land, in this way of Taxing. All those are mistaken arguments. And though they were not so, though all the conveniencies in the World were to be found in this new method, though there were never so great ease to our Lands in it, yet the single consideration of what the Nation hazards in giving a Revenue, that probably will never be discontinued, and the danger to which the Liberties of the Kingdom will be exposed, if ever the Crown shall be Rich enough to Govern without Parliaments, is abundantly sufficient to over-balance whatever can be alledged to the contrary from Topicks of present ease, or private interest. The Constitution, the Constitution is our happiness. Let any inconveniencies be submitted to, rather than that brought into danger. We stand upon a needless point; the Revenue of

the Crown is so very high already, that one remove more does our business. *England* can never be undone, but by its own consent: Have a care then of giving that fatal consent. We have hitherto been the envy of all our Neighbours for our Liberties, and the Privileges we enjoy; the greatest of which, is being governed by Laws made by our own Representatives. All we have is owing to the preservation of Parliaments, and making their frequent Meetings necessary. Let Taxes be laid so, that they may cease with their cause, and so Parliaments may not become unnecessary. I shall stop here, and say no more concerning a Land-Tax, because this Paper is too long already, and because my chief intent in writing it (as I said before) was not so much to urge arguments for a Land-Tax, as to offer some considerations, which might shew the danger of a General Excise.

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F I N I S.